

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 5, 8, and 12 have been amended, and claim 14 has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-14 are pending in this application. No new matter has been introduced by this Amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, claim 12 was objected to; claims 1, 6-8, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,612,718 to Bryan; claims 1-3, 6-10, 12, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,617,929 to Richardson et al. ("Richardson") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,065,560 to Palmeri et al. ("Palmeri"); claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Richardson in view of Palmeri and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,478,308 to Klaassen; and claims 4 and 5 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants thank Examiners Brown and Dunn for the courtesy extended during the personal interview with Applicants' representatives held on August 18, 2006, to discuss the rejections and the prior art in view of the claims.

Regarding the objection of claim 12, claim 12 has been amended to correct the typographical error, as suggested by the Examiner.

As discussed during the personal interview of August 18, 2006, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the interface module connecting portion is "pivotally connectable to said at least one armrest associated with the seat in the machine." Support for this amendment can be found at least in claim 1 as originally filed, Figs. 2-8, and ¶¶ 15-17 of the specification.

Applicants thank Examiners Brown and Dunn for considering a new search in view of the amendment to claim 1 and the references of record, as stated in the Interview Summary dated August 18, 2006. Regarding the rejection of independent claim 1 over Bryan, Bryan discloses a chair (100) having arms (198, 199) that support keyboard sections (200, 300) such that the keyboard sections (200, 300) may be positioned at different angles with respect to the arms (198, 199) (Bryan, Fig. 31 and col. 12, ll. 51-64). However, as discussed during the personal interview of August 18, 2006, Bryan does not disclose or suggest, *inter alia*, an interface module connecting portion pivotally connectable to at least one armrest associated with a seat in a machine, as recited in the claim.

Regarding the rejection of independent claim 1 over Richardson in view of Palmeri, these references also do not disclose or suggest, *inter alia*, an interface module connecting portion pivotally connectable to at least one armrest associated with a seat in a machine, as recited in the claim. Richardson discloses a gear shift console assembly (10) that is pivotally mounted to a side of a seat (12) of a vehicle (16) (Richardson, col. 2, ll. 46-51). However, as discussed during the personal interview of August 18, 2006, Richardson does not disclose or suggest an armrest associated with the seat (12).

Palmeri discloses an armrest (32) associated with a vehicle seat (Palmeri, col. 2, ll. 2-3). An input shift module (20) is pivotally mounted to the seat using a mount bar (34) and has an upper platform (28) at an approximately equal vertical location as the armrest (32) (Palmeri, col. 2, ll. 1-6). The Office Action contends that it would be obvious to modify Richardson's seat (12) to include Palmeri's armrest (32). However,

as discussed during the personal interview of August 18, 2006, Palmeri does not disclose or suggest that the mount bar (34) of the input shift module (20) would be connectable to the armrest (32) since Palmeri's mount bar (34) is connected to the seat. Therefore, there is no motivation to modify Richardson's seat (12) to connect Richardson's gear shift console assembly (10) to an armrest.

Furthermore, Richardson teaches away from providing an armrest. In the Background of the Invention, Richardson states that conventional gear shift consoles are mounted to the right of the driver seat, but that "the stationary shift console between the driver and passenger seats provides a substantial obstacle that the driver or passenger must climb over or around when moving about the cab" (Richardson, col. 1, ll. 12-20). Therefore, Richardson teaches away from providing an armrest, which would add stationary bulk between the driver seat and the passenger seat, and the armrest would be a substantial obstacle that the driver or passenger must maneuver around.

In the personal interview of August 18, 2006, Applicants' representatives and Examiners Brown and Dunn discussed amending claim 1 to state that "the interface module connecting portion is directly connectable to the at least one armrest." However, this is not necessary in view of the cited prior art for the reasons described above. New claim 14, which depends on claim 1, has been added to include this feature.

Applicants thank Examiners Brown and Dunn for acknowledging that independent claims 12 and 13 read over the references of record, as stated in the Interview Summary dated August 18, 2006. Regarding the rejection of independent claims 12 and 13 over Richardson in view of Palmeri, these references do not disclose

or suggest, *inter alia*, an interface module working portion being at least partially concealed by an armrest, as recited in the claims. The Office Action contends that Richardson's gear shift lever (42) serves as an interface module working portion. However, as discussed during the personal interview of August 18, 2006, the gear shift lever (42) is not positionable such that it is at least partially concealed by an armrest. Furthermore, Palmeri's paddle (26) in the input shift module (20) is also not positionable such that it is at least partially concealed by an armrest.

Bryan, Richardson, and Palmeri, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest at least these limitations recited in independent claims 1, 12, and 13. Accordingly, the allowance of independent claims 1, 12, and 13 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 3, 6-11, and 14 are allowable at least due to their dependency on independent claim 1. In addition, each of claims 2, 3, 6-11, and 14 recites unique combinations that are neither taught nor suggested by the cited art, and therefore each is also separately patentable.

Regarding the rejection of claim 11 over Richardson in view of Palmeri and Klaassen, claim 11 depends on claim 1. Therefore, Applicants assert that claim 11 is also allowable over Richardson and Palmeri for at least the reasons described above with respect to claim 1. Furthermore, Klaassen does not cure the deficiencies of Richardson and Palmeri. Klaassen also does not disclose or suggest, *inter alia*, an interface module connecting portion pivotally connectable to at least one armrest, as recited in claim 1. Klaassen teaches a driver seat (1) with elbow rests (6, 7) and a control lever (51, 51') connected to columns (4, 5), which are connected to each elbow

rest (6, 7) (Klaassen, col. 2, ll. 1, 4, col. 3, ll. 61-63, and col. 4, ll. 26-28). However, Klaassen does not disclose an interface module connecting portion that is pivotally connectable to the elbow rests (6, 7).

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action or Advisory Action.

In discussing the specification, claims, and drawings in this Amendment, it is to be understood that Applicants are in no way intending to limit the scope of the claims to an exemplary embodiment described in the specification or abstract and/or shown in the drawings. Rather, Applicants are entitled to have the claims interpreted broadly, to the maximum extent permitted by statute, regulation, and applicable case law.

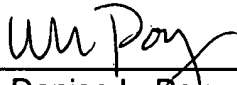
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account no. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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